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LONDON

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1962



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ON MITHRA IN THE MANICHAEAN PANTHEON

By MARY BOYCE

That a difference exists between the original form of Manichaeism and its developments in various lands was long since established by Schaeder, who regarded the local adaptations as part of Mani's deliberate attempt to be the "interpreter of religion" to all mankind.¹ Schaeder saw two purposes in Mani's identification of his gods with those of other faiths: to make his own teachings more readily comprehensible to different peoples, and to give fresh meaning to ancient beliefs, in which he held there to be a kernel of verity.² Mani, believing as he did that the prophets who were his forerunners had taught the truth, necessarily also thought that the gods whom they had preached were true gods, made known to diverse people under different names. The "translation" of the names of Manichaean gods by those of other deities must therefore be held an attempt by him to discover his own gods under their older, local guises. Mani's further belief, that all earlier religions had become corrupt, implies, however, that he also thought that the worship of their gods had grown uncertain and confused. Evidently it was for this reason that in some instances a single Manichaean god came to be identified with more than one deity in an alien cult. This fact had not yet been established when Schaeder made his study. Its workings tend, however, to disprove one of his main contentions, namely that such local adaptations were all part of a "bewusster und planmässiger Umstilisierung" carried through by the prophet himself.³ The freedom to "translate" in this way was plainly due to Mani's own initiative, but it evidently remained open also to his followers after him.

¹ H. H. Schaeder, *Urform und Fortbildungen des manichäischen Systems*, (1924-5), 128.

² *Ibid.*, 147, 115.

³ *Ibid.*, 146 (Schaeder envisaged here the likelihood that *minor* developments took place after Mani's death).

Schaeder further maintained that such local adaptations were purely superficial, and that although they had a proper basis and justification, they exerted no influence on Mani's original conceptions.¹ Clearly he was right in insisting that Mani's system as a whole remained intact, in all its logic and coherence; but was it in fact possible for his gods to be identified with powerful older deities, and yet to remain unaffected by their ancient cults? In this short article it is proposed to examine this question, in considering the local influence on Manichaeism of one god, the Iranian Mithra.

Mithra came to be identified with two Manichaean gods. Among the Sasanian Persians his name was used to render that of the Living Spirit. It was earlier suggested that the identifying factor in this case was the common function of demiurge, attested however for Mithra only in one Greek text.² One of the Sogdian names for the Living Spirit, "Lord of the Seven Climes",³ stresses the importance in Manichaean myth of this god's function as maker of the world. Nevertheless the evidence now supplied by the Coptic *Kephalaia* and *Psalm-Book* makes it probable that it was rather as a warrior-god and conqueror of the powers of evil that he was identified with Mithra. Mithra himself, as god of the Contract,⁴ was regarded as a defender of the truth, and hence a foe to treachery and to false gods. His many weapons rain down upon "the evil heads of evil gods" (*kamərəde paiti daēvanqm*),⁵ and his worshippers invoke him as the "head-smasher of evil gods" (*kamərəδō.ʃanəm daēvanqm*),⁶ the "engager of witches" (*hamaēstārəm pairikanqm*),⁷ one "from whom the Fiendish Spirit, very deadly, recoils in fear . . . from whom all supernatural evil gods . . . recoil in fear" (*yahmaṭ hača fratərəsaiti awrō mainyuš pouru.mahrkō . . . yahmaṭ hača fratərəsənti vīspe mainyava daēva*).⁸ He

¹ *Ibid.*, 145-6.

² See Schaeder, *op. cit.* 104 n.; further W. B. Henning, in *Mir. Man.* i 177 n.3; *OLZ* 1934, 7 n.2; I. Gershevitch, *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra* (1959), 210-12.

³ See Henning, "A Sogdian Fragment of the Manichaean Cosmogony", *BSOAS* XII 2 (1948), 314.

⁴ See most recently P. Thieme, *Mitra and Aryaman* (1957); Gershevitch, *op. cit.*, introduction.

⁵ *Mīhr Yašt* 129-33 (the citations from this *yašt* are here given in general in Gershevitch's translation).

⁶ MY. 26.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ MY. 97 (cf. 68, 93, 99, 134).

acquires the secondary aspect of a god of war, and is hailed as the "warrior endowed with strength of arm" (*bāzuš.aojanham raθaēstam*).¹ In Manichaeism the Living Spirit was likewise a great warrior-god, who smote the demons, and slew great numbers of them, and fettered others. He was "[the beginning] of all warriors",² "the subduer of all the sons of the abyss".³ He "made war with them; he subdued their camps; he hurt their height".⁴ As Mithra overthrows the false ruler,⁵ so the Living Spirit attacked "the rebels of the world".⁶ He "fettered the tyrants of the earth, he took from them their kingdom . . . he caused them to be led away to the punishment . . . he wrest from them their power".⁷ In that he was the first conqueror of the demons, he is justly linked with Mithra, "the most victorious of the gods" (*vərəθra-ǰastamō yazatanam*).⁸ Both are "the fetterers of untruth" (*ánrtasya sétū*).⁹

Another secondary aspect of Mithra, that of sun-god, had come to be prominent in his cult by the Christian era; and plainly it would have been difficult to identify with him at this period a warrior-god unconnected with the sun.¹⁰ According to Manichaean doctrine, however, the Living Spirit both made the sun in the beginning, and occupied thereafter one of the three thrones within it.¹¹ The two gods had enough in common, therefore, to make a formal identification possible. It seems likely, however, that this identification was largely a paper one, for there were two obstacles to its being whole-heartedly accepted by converts. Firstly, the Living Spirit had his station in the west,¹² the quarter of the setting sun, whose going down brought the dreaded dark, and symbolized for the Manichaeans the end of the

¹ MY. 25 (cf. 140).

² *Kephalaia* 43³⁵.

³ *Psalm-Book* 2³⁻⁴.

⁴ *Ibid.* 212¹⁰⁻¹¹.

⁵ MY. 111.

⁶ *Psalm-Book* 212⁶⁻⁷.

⁷ *Ibid.* 212¹⁴⁻¹⁸.

⁸ MY. 98.

⁹ RV. 7.65.3a (see Thieme, *op. cit.* 52); on the ethical aspect of Mithra's attacks see Thieme, *op. cit.* 28, 51.

¹⁰ That the Sasanian Persians should have been alone in not worshipping Mithra under this aspect (see Gershevitch, *op. cit.*, p. 41) is hard to believe. As Gershevitch points out (*ibid.*, p. 38), the ancient association of the god with the sun led almost inevitably to his worship as a solar deity.

¹¹ See TM 291 (W.-L. i 49-50); *Keph.* 82³¹.

¹² See *Mir. Man.* i 177 n 3; W.-L. ii 546.

world.¹ It must have been hard, therefore, to identify him with Mithra, god of the dawn.² Secondly, his task as conqueror of demons was accomplished before the world began. He was not, like Mithra, a god intervening actively in the affairs of men, and did not, therefore, receive constant devotions. No hymns survive addressed to him.³

It was the gods of the Manichaean Third Creation, the redeemers, who gave present help to man; and it so happened that the first of these, the Third Messenger, had traits which gave him also strong claims to be recognized as the true Mithra. He too, like all the redeeming gods, was a warrior, a "battle-stirrer" (*razmyōz*), for ever fighting against evil. He too was linked with the sun; he had set it in motion, and he had the first throne within it. Moreover, the belief that he dwelt in the sun is given prominence in his worship, in Egypt as in Iran, whereas for the Living Spirit this is a secondary feature, barely recorded in the surviving texts. The Third Messenger was moreover assigned to the quarter of the east, of the rising sun.⁴ In his own *Psalm*, *Wazurgān Āfrīwan*, Mani invokes him as "Beautiful East!";⁵ and in a Middle Persian fragment he is hailed as the dawn: "The *morning-light and dawn is come, the radiant Light from the east. Imposingly the King has appeared, God Narisah" (*āmad *wazēh ud bāmdād, rōšn ispīxt az hwarāsān. Būd paydāg sahēnēhāh, šahriyār, yazd Narisah*).⁶ Further, he was constantly and daily concerned with human activities, and is invoked in many hymns.

The Third Messenger was, however, for good and apparent reasons, identified among the Sasanians with Nairyōsanza (Narisah, Narisaf), the Zoroastrian messenger-god. Both deities filled the part of envoy from God to man—the Manichaean Messenger as the first

¹ *Keph.* 165¹⁻¹⁵.

² On Mithra as god of the dawn see Gershevitch, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-2, 319-20.

³ The two hymns concerned with the god in the Coptic *Psalm-Book* 211-3 are not addressed to him; and the entry under *Spiritus Vivens* in Boyce, *A Catalogue of the Iran. MSS. in Man. Script in the German Turfan Collection*, p. 148, is a mistake. The hymn in question is addressed to sun and moon.

⁴ M 470 R 14-15 (*HR* ii 19), where he is given the descriptive appellation *Rošnšahryazd*, also used in Parthian (see *Mir. Man.* iii 883 n 8; M 583 I V 7-9 (*W.-L.* ii 546)).

⁵ Publication in preparation; the relevant passage is given by Henning "Bráhma", *TPS* 1944, 112-3.

⁶ See *Mir. Man.* i 192 n 6. M 5260 (*T II D* 66) is a missing fragment, otherwise unrecorded; but in the light of Parthian parallels it is probable that the lines quoted are the opening words of an abecedarian hymn to the Third Messenger.

of the redeeming gods. The Third Messenger was further believed to have shown himself naked to the demons in the skies, so that it was in his image that mankind was made. This myth was of great importance in the Manichaean version of genesis, and the Coptic texts concerning the Third Messenger contain repeated references to it. A remotely similar myth was told of Nairyōsānha.¹ Moreover, the Commagene inscription, with its linking of Helios and Hermes, suggests a connection between an oriental messenger-god and the sun. The identification with Nairyōsānha thus covered three aspects of the Third Messenger, two of which, envoy and prototype of humanity, have no counterpart in Mithra.²

Nevertheless, the similarities between the Third Messenger and Mithra were evidently so strong that the Manichaean missionaries to Parthia felt that they could not be set aside. Accordingly, they³ abandoned the earlier identification of the Living Spirit with Mithra, and identified the Third Messenger with both Mithra and Nairyōsānha. Plainly they believed that among the Parthians the great Manichaean god was being confusedly worshipped as two deities. Later still, the Sogdians, who received Manichaeism from the Parthians, identified with Nairyōsānha the Manichaean "Second Messenger",⁴ the Friend of the Lights. Three reasons suggest themselves for this fresh identification. Firstly, it is probable that in Iranian minds there was a clear distinction between Mithra and Nairyōsānha, and a reluctance to confound them in one god.⁵ Secondly, the Manichaean Friend of the Lights was a minor divinity in the cult, as was Nairyōsānha (at least in orthodox Zoroastrianism). Thirdly—and chiefly, from the point of view of the present study—

¹ See F. Cumont, *Recherches sur le manichéisme* 34, 61 ff.; *Mir. Man.* i 192 n.6; Gershevitch, *op. cit.*, pp. 205–6.

² The various attempts made since Cumont's (*op. cit.*, 63) to identify Mithra with Gayōmard have failed to carry general conviction.

³ It seems probable that the missionaries in question were Mar Ammo and his companions, Ammo being the father of the eastern church. It seems hardly justifiable to suppose that the new identification necessarily took place after Mani's death (Gershevitch, *op. cit.*, p. 40). It had, or should have had, no effect on Manichaean dogma; and the evidence suggests that the prophet was flexible in such matters, which must have been for him of minor importance.

⁴ *Chinese Hymnscroll* 125 a (W.-L. ii 486, 500). On the identification see W.-L. i 40 ff.; Henning, *OLZ* 1934, 6 ff.

⁵ Again, the various attempts made since Cumont's (*op. cit.*, 63 n 4) to establish an identification of Nairyōsānha with Mithra have failed to win general assent.

although the myth of the seduction of the Archontes had its proper place in Iranian renderings of the Manichaean scriptures, it is given little emphasis in the surviving Parthian hymns to the Third Messenger. In only one of these is there an unambiguous reference to it.¹ Otherwise it is indirectly evoked by allusions to the beauty of the god, the "fair shape" (*zabēn pādḡirb*),² the "lovely apparition" (**gōnyāḡ dīdan*),³ the "bright form" (*čihrag rōšn*).⁴ The "radiance and beauty" (*bām ud agrāyī*)⁵ of the god's appearance in the sky is, however, the one aspect of the seduction-myth which blends readily with his worship as Mithra. These allusions, therefore, together with the general character of the hymns, suggest that among the Parthians the dominance of Mithra was such that his identification with the Third Messenger led to cultic emphasis on the Mithraic traits in the Manichaean god. This must have smoothed the way for the Sogdians to abandon the earlier identification with Nairyōsaṇha, the features which supported it having become subordinate in the imagination of worshippers.

Mithra's influence went further, however, than causing an emphasis on traits common to the two gods. It also brought about the transfer to the Third Messenger of functions peculiar to Mithra. The most striking result of this process is that the Third Messenger became a sun-god among the Parthians. Several pieces of evidence survive to show that he was not conceived as one originally. Firstly, although Mani ordained reverence for the sun, both as a symbol and "the gate of Life", he did not teach worship for it as a personal god.⁶ Its fashioning by the Living Spirit is recorded in the myth; with its walls and gates, dwellings and thrones,⁷ it, like the moon, formed a halting-place for souls on their journey back to Paradise, and a circling castle for the redeeming gods. Secondly, in Mani's own *Wazurgān Āfrīwān*, the words "Beautiful East" are the only surviving ones which in any way link the Third Messenger with the sun.

¹ M 737, 1-4 (*BSOAS* XIII 4, 1951, p. 915).

² M 32 V 8-9 (*HR* ii 64).

³ *Mir. Man.* iii n 16.

⁴ *Ibid.*, n 30 (that a reference to the Third Messenger is here intended is not wholly certain).

⁵ *Mir. Man.* i, p. 183, line 6.

⁶ *Keph.* 158⁸¹; cf. *Mir. Man.* iii n 32-3, and for further references *ibid.*, p. 887, n.5.

⁷ See M 98 R 11-17 (*HR* ii 37); *Mir. Man.* i, p. 178, lines 8-9.

Thirdly, there is the fact of the god's initial identification in Iran, not with the solar deity Mithra, but with Nairyōsaṃha. Fourthly, in the Coptic texts the Third Messenger is frequently invoked as living in the sun, but is given no solar attributes. The Coptic evidence appears more reliable than the Iranian for the original nature of this god, since among converts from Christianity there was no suitable deity with whom to identify him, and hence no ancient cult to influence his worship.

In the Coptic *Kephalaia* there is a whole discourse devoted to the sun.¹ Similar homiletic texts existed in Parthian, but fragments only survive. Strikingly, the closest extant Parthian parallels to the *Kephalaia* chapter come from hymns dedicated to the Third Messenger. In the *Kephalaia* discourse are set out the "seven benefactions" of the sun. These are physical or symbolic benefits conferred by the heavenly body in its orbit. Six of these seven benefactions are attributed to the Third Messenger in two unpublished Parthian hymns addressed to him.² Both hymns begin, like the Middle Persian one already cited, by hailing the Third Messenger as the dawn: "The Light is come, and near the dawn! Arise, brethren, give praise!" (*āgad rōšn ud nazd bāmdād, āxēzēd, brādarān, dahēd istāwīšn*);³ and "The Light is come, and near the Leader (*nazd wādāg*). Arise, brethren, give praise!"⁴ Then follow verses of praise and exhortation, in which the parallels to the Coptic text occur without any order. The first benefaction of the sun given in the *Kephalaia* is that "it opens the eyes of all men . . . it takes from them the blindness of Night".⁵ When the Third Messenger "has come to the world" (*ō šahr āgad*),⁶ men are urged: "Abandon sleep, awake, behold the Light which is drawn near!" (*xwamr karēd *wigāmīft, abar wigrāsēd, wēnēd rōšn kē nazd āgad*).⁷ They declare: "We shall forget the dark Night" (*šab syāwag bawām frāmušt*).⁸ The sun's second benefaction is that it takes away, with the darkness, fear.⁹ The Messenger "takes away fear"

¹ *Keph.* LXV.

² Both in M 30 (publication in preparation, see Boyce, *Catalogue*).

³ M 30, 87-8.

⁴ M 30, 49-50.

⁵ *Keph.* 159¹⁹⁻²¹.

⁶ M 30, 78.

⁷ M 30, 75-7.

⁸ M 30, 96-7.

⁹ *Keph.* 159²²⁻²⁷.

(*tars izgirwēd*).¹ Thirdly, at the sun's coming all men rise up from sleep.² When the Messenger, the Light, appears, then "spirits, souls and all creatures look upon him and arise from (their) fall" (*gyānān grīwān ud wisp dāmdādān pad hau wēnēnd ud aš kafišn padrazēnd*).³ Fourthly, the sun draws out the strength and savour of all trees and fruits and plants.⁴ This has no parallel in the surviving verses to the Third Messenger. Fifthly, when the sun shines "the evil snakes and the sharp-fanged beasts . . . run to hiding in their caves".⁵ When the Messenger appears "all the sons of Darkness hide" (*nigōzēnd harwīn tārīg zādag*);⁶ "all the demons, wild beasts and vermin are afraid, they depart afar off from him" (*harwīn yaxšān dadān ud dēwagān tirsēnd, aš hau dūr bēh abnamēnd*).⁷ Sixthly, the sun by its shining heals wounds and defeats black magic.⁸ The Messenger "gives health and joy to the world . . . and puts an end to pain" (*drōd ud rāmišn uxad ō šahr karēd . . . ud dard angāwēd*).⁹ Seventhly, the sun "displays and reveals to the world the sign of the glory of the Aeon of Light".¹⁰ With the coming of the Messenger "the sign of the lofty realm has become apparent, and all who have eyes, perceive" (*burz šahrdārīft nīšān paydāg, ud izwārēnd kē būd čašmwar*).¹¹

It appears from this comparison of texts that the sun-worshipping Iranians who came to accept Manichaeism found the doctrine of the sun as symbol and impersonal benefactor inadequate, and fused reverence for it with worship of the Messenger as dweller in the sun and in the east; whereas Coptic converts, with no predisposition to worship a personal sun-god, kept more strictly to Mani's original teachings.

In the Parthian hymns, where this development is most marked, the two strands of belief, orthodox and heterodox, are clearly visible.

¹ M 30, 111.

² *Keph.* 159²⁸⁻³⁰.

³ M 30, 107-9.

⁴ *Keph.* 160¹⁻³.

⁵ *Keph.* 160⁴⁻⁶.

⁶ M 30, 83; cf. *Mir. Man.* iii m 23-5 (which, in the light of M 30, is probably rather to be translated: "The sons of Darkness are conquered upon earth; the sons of Day, awakened, praise thee").

⁷ M 30, 112-4.

⁸ *Keph.* 160⁷⁻⁹.

⁹ M 30, 110-11, 116.

¹⁰ *Keph.* 160¹⁰⁻¹¹.

¹¹ M 30, 105-6.

According to the one, the Third Messenger appears, as in the Coptic texts, as a god living in the sun, together with the Mother of Life, the Living Spirit, and the mighty "pearl-gathering" Fathers.¹ According to the other, he is the very sun itself, the "bright Lamp" (*lamtēr nisāg*),² the "Illuminer" (*rōšnāgar*),³ "the radiance and brightness of the world of seven climes" (*bām . . . ud nisāgift če haft kišfar zambūdig*).⁴ His light "shines in every land and region" (*tābēd pad harw šahr ud pādgoš*),⁵ and from him come "all the rays . . . in the whole world" (*harwīn fradāb . . . pad hamag zambūdig*).⁶ Further, the zone of heaven is divided "according to (his) course" (*anwāy . . . čamag*),⁷ and he "passes on high through those six thresholds, he shines light upon earth through those twelve gates" (*aš abar čamēd pad hawīn šuh āstānag, tābēd rōšn ō zamīg pad hawīn dwādes barān*).⁸ His course is "ever from the north to the east, from the east to the south, from the south to the west" (*čīd . . . aš abāxtar ō hwarāsān, aš hwarāsān ō nēmrož, ud aš nēmrož ō hwarnīfrān*).⁹

There can be little doubt that the development by which the Third Messenger thus became a sun-god is to be attributed to his identification with Mithra as he was worshipped in the early centuries of the Christian era. In his own *yašt*, composed in about the fifth century B.C., Mithra is not presented as a sun-god, but only as a deity closely associated with the sun.¹⁰ Even so there are some natural coincidences with the Manichaean texts, Coptic and Iranian. Mithra too illumines the world each dawn, and he too by so doing baffles the workings of evil: "In the morning (he) brings into evidence the many shapes" (*paoiriš vaēīdiš sūrēm frādāiti*),¹¹ he comes forward "to cross the pleasure of the Falsehood-owning Fiendish Spirit"

¹ *Mir. Man.* iii n 21–3.

² M 32 R 5 (*HR* ii 62).

³ *Mir. Man.* iii o 6, 35, 55 (= φωστήρ, used of the sun, *Keph.* 159^a, 160¹⁶, 163¹⁷). The epithet *rōšnāgar* is also found of Mani himself, the "Illuminer" of the spiritual sphere (*Mir. Man.* iii g 193). Cf. the similar use of φωστήρ in the Coptic texts, *passim*.

⁴ *Mir. Man.* iii o 7–9.

⁵ *Ibid.*, o 10–12.

⁶ *Ibid.*, m 12–14.

⁷ *Ibid.*, o 34–5.

⁸ *Ibid.*, o 36–40.

⁹ *Ibid.*, o 65–9.

¹⁰ See Gershevitch, *op. cit.*, intro. 35–40.

¹¹ *MY.* 142, cf. 13.

(*tarasča anrahe mainyēuš drvatō zaošq*).¹ He has the epithet "making plants grow" (*uxšyač.urvaram*).²

In addition to his function of sun-god, there are older aspects of Mithra, better attested in his *yašt*, which also had their influence on the Parthian cult of the Third Messenger. As the god of Contract, Mithra was ever-vigilant, speeding over the world by day and night³ to watch the true man and the traitor. He "flies" (*fravazaitē*),⁴ he is "fast among the fast" (*āsunqm āsuš*),⁵ "the swiftest of the gods, the fastest of the gods" (*yō θwaxšišō yazatanqm, yō āsišō yazatanqm*).⁶ The Third Messenger likewise was very swift in his going. As the sun he "hastened with zeal" (*nidfurd pad abrang*);⁷ but his "spirit-course" (*gyānēn čamag*) is described as "faster than thought, swifter than the wind blows, more hasty than the night at eve" (*tiragistar aš parmānag, ragistar aš wād wazēd, nidfurdistar aš šab pad šām*).⁸ This, although it accords with the ancient conception of Mithra, has no particular relevance to the character of the Manichaean god. The vigilant Mithra is further worshipped as having "a thousand perceptions" (*hazanra.yaoxštīm*),⁹ "ten thousand eyes" (*baēvara.čāš-manam*).¹⁰ In Parthian the Third Messenger has become "the thousand-eyed" (*hazār-čāšm*)¹¹—a striking new attribute for the prototype of man.

As the guardian of Contract Mithra is hailed as the "temporal and religious judge of living beings" (*ahūm ratūmča gaēthanqm*).¹² The Third Messenger was not, according to Manichaean doctrine, a judge; and although the ready transference of epithets from one Manichaean god to another makes it feasible that he should borrow this function from Jesus, yet it is striking that it is only in the Parthian hymns that he is so invoked, and there repeatedly. In them he is called "the

¹ MY. 118.

² MY. 61.

³ See Gershevitch, *op. cit.*, intro. 31

⁴ MY. 99.

⁵ MY. 65.

⁶ MY. 98.

⁷ *Mir. Man.* iii o 69–70.

⁸ *Ibid.*, o 12–16.

⁹ MY. 35, cf. 107.

¹⁰ MY. 7, cf. 91, 141.

¹¹ *Mir. Man.* iii n 19.

¹² MY. 92; cf. 79, and see Gershevitch, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

Leader, the Judge" (*wādāg, razwar*),¹ "the Shepherd, the Judge" (*gēhbān, razwar*),² "the Judge in earth and heaven" (*dādbar . . . pad zamīg ud asmān*).³ His course through the sky is "the course of the Judge" (*razwar čamag*).⁴ Moreover, he is twice hailed as being both "judge and witness" (*dādbar ud wigāh*).⁵ This has no parallel in the *Mihr Yašt* itself, but appears to spring naturally from the concept of Mithra as both enforcer of justice and "inspector and supervisor" of the world (*harətārəmča aiwyāxštārəmča*),⁶ the one who surveys "guilt and non-guilt" from his throne on high.⁷ It is not readily comprehensible in terms of Manichaean dogma.

There is thus little doubt that, had an Egyptian Manichaean been able to join in the Parthian invocations of the Third Messenger, he would have found himself worshipping a god transformed. Yet probably he would have been perplexed rather than immediately shocked by this heterodoxy; for despite alien traits, the god remained essentially Manichaean, one of the compassionate redeemers of the Light. Those characteristics of Mithra's which were not consonant with Mani's teachings—the god's fierceness towards erring men, his granting of material favours, his succour in physical war—failed to attach themselves to the Third Messenger. His functions of sun-god, vigilant watcher, and judge of truth harmonized readily with Manichaean doctrine, and their transference to the Third Messenger demanded little more than a "regrouping" of dogma (the expression is Schaefer's). The essence of Mani's teachings remained intact; but this local development shows that even he, the most literate of the prophets, could not wholly prevent distortion of his carefully-enshrined doctrine. It also shows the power of the Iranian Mithra, who thus set his bright and ancient stamp on the intruding Manichaean god.

¹ *Mir. Man.* iii n 38.

² *Ibid.*, m 50-1.

³ *Ibid.*, m 10-11.

⁴ *Ibid.*, o 24.

⁵ *Ibid.*, n 18, m 10-12.

⁶ MY. 103.

⁷ RV. 5.62.8 (Thieme, *op. cit.*, p. 69).